

REMARKS

The Office Action of September 17, 2009, rejected all pending claims 1, 3-15, 17-29 and 31-41. Applicants above have amended claims 1 and 29, and have canceled claims 15 and 17-28. As such, claims 1, 3-14, 29 and 31-41 are pending. Applicants request reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the following remarks.

Examiner Interview Summary

Applicants thank Examiner Dunham for the courtesies extended in the telephonic interview conducted October 7, 2009. Participants in the interview were the undersigned attorney, Stephen Schaefer, and Examiner Dunham. Participants discussed during the interview claim 1 and the Schwartzhoff and Nichols references cited in connection with the obviousness rejection of claim 1. Although no agreement was reached with respect to patentability of claim 1, a better understanding of each side's positions was achieved, and in addition, the Examiner suggested that Applicants provide further clarification as to the functional aspects of the claimed "sourcing graphical user interface," which suggestion Applicants have attempted to address in the amendments above.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 112

Claims 15 and 17-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. While Applicants disagree with the Examiner on this point, Applicants have canceled these claims in order to advance prosecution on the merits, and do so without prejudice. As such, the Section 112 rejections are now moot.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

Claims 1, 3-8, 15, 17-22, 29 and 31-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwarzhoff (US 6,591,260) in view of Nichols (US 2003/0055652). The remaining dependent claims 9-14, 23-28 and 37-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwarzhoff in view of Nichols, further in view of Stone (US

2002/0107889). Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 29, as amended, are patentable over the references of record, and ask that the obviousness rejections be removed.

Without conceding the correctness of the rejection and in order to advance prosecution on the merits, Applicants have amended the independent claims 1 and 29 to provide further clarity as to functional aspects of the claimed "sourcing graphical user interface," as suggested by the Examiner in the examiner interview discussed above. In particular, claims 1 and 29 are amended to clarify that the first area of the sourcing graphical user interface is a "user entry" area, and are amended to clarify that the second area includes a "user selectable listing," wherein "each of the listed at least one external contact directory is user selectable." This amendment add no new matter. Support for the amendment appears in the specification as originally filed, for example, in Figure 3 and corresponding textual description of that figure. In this particular embodiment shown in Figure 3, for example, the claimed "first user entry area" would comprise the search field 325 for searching for a supplier from existing business partners (see para. 0018), and the claimed "second area" that includes the claimed "user selectable listing" would comprise pull down menu 315 that provides one or more external service providers (see para. 0017 and 0018).

In addition, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 29 to positively recite the function of "receiving a user selection of one of the listed at least one external contact directory." This amendment too adds no new matter, and is supported by the specification as originally filed, for example, in the flowchart of Figure 2A and associated textual description at paragraph 0018.

Schwartzhoff and Nichols, even if combined, do not disclose or suggest Applicants' independent claims 1 and 29, as amendment. Indeed, there are important aspects of claims 1 and 29 that are not disclosed in Schwartzhoff or Nichols or any other reference of record, for the reasons discussed below.

Schwartzhoff Distinctions

Schwartzhoff discloses a method of retrieving schemas for interpreting documents in an electronic commerce system. (Title.) Schwartzhoff makes use of LDAP-type directory service. (Col. 2, line 55 et seq.) This directory contains information that is accessed to inform as to the

storage location for a schema needed to interpret a document. (Figure 3 and column 8, line 22 to column 10, line 38.)

Schwartzhoff is missing various aspects of claims 1 and 29. For example, Schwartzhoff first does not disclose or suggest, as recited in claims 1 and 29, the claimed “sourcing graphical user interface” that is provided as part of an initiated electronic purchasing process, and that includes the claimed “first user entry area” and the claimed “second area including a user-selectable listing.”

Schwartzhoff also does not disclose or suggest the remaining elements of claims 1 and 29, for example, “receiving a user selection of one of the listed at least one external contact directory, and upon receiving the user selection, establishing electronic communication, by the purchasing computing system, with the selected external contact directory, and receiving information from the selected external contact directory to provide, on the display device of the purchasing computing system, a display of a directory of the suppliers in the selected external contact directory.” Schwartzhoff, by contrast, has no need to display the information being retrieved from the directory, because the information is being used in the background to interpret a document.

Schwartzhoff further does not disclose or suggest, as recited in claims 1 and 29, “upon receiving, at the purchasing computing system, a user selection of one of the suppliers included in the selected external contact directory, sending an electronic request from the purchasing computing system and to the selected external contact directory, the electronic request identifying the selected supplier, and in response receiving an electronic response that includes predefined required information to create in the internal contact directory a contact entry for the selected supplier.” Nor does Schwartzhoff disclose or suggest, as recited in claims 1 and 29, “creating, using the information from the electronic response, a new contact entry in the internal contact directory, the new contact entry for the selected supplier,” or “assigning the selected supplier as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process.” By contrast, Schwartzhoff does not relate to the retrieval of supplier information, and does not involve a process that is

under the control of a user. Rather, it is a process that executes in the background to retrieve information to interpret a document.

Nichols Distinctions

Nichols generally discloses a private network exchange for use by, for example, the car industry, including the "Big Three" car makers and suppliers. (Paras. 0003-0009.) Some of the important purposes of the Nichols system are disclosed to be providing secure access to documents (CAD files, for example) and providing secure e-mail communications (See generally para. 0074.) The system in Nichols includes an "ANX [Automotive Network eXchange] directory service" 64, shown in the block diagram of Figure 2. Nichols discloses that this directory service provides directories of people and organizations who are members. (See paras. 0081-0086.) In addition, Nichols discloses a portal (para. 0119) to provide views into the directory (para. 0211). For example, the portal provides a "white pages" type search (para. 0122) and a "yellow pages" type search (para. 124). (See Figure 12.) In addition, Nichols discloses a procedure for how the directory can be built, which includes members of the network providing their information into the directory. (See generally Figure 8 and paras. 183-202.)

Nichols too is missing various aspects of claims 1 and 29. For example, Nichols first does not disclose or suggest, as recited in claims 1 and 29, the claimed "sourcing graphical user interface" that is provided as part of an initiated electronic purchasing process, and that includes the claimed "first user entry area" and the claimed "second area including a user-selectable listing."

Nichols also does not disclose or suggest, as recited in claims 1 and 29, "upon receiving, at the purchasing computing system, a user selection of one of the suppliers included in the selected external contact directory, sending an electronic request from the purchasing computing system and to the selected external contact directory, the electronic request identifying the selected supplier, and in response receiving an electronic response that includes predefined required information to create in the internal contact directory a contact entry for the selected supplier." Nor does Nichols disclose or suggest, as recited in claims 1 and 29, "creating, using

the information from the electronic response, a new contact entry in the internal contact directory, the new contact entry for the selected supplier,” or “assigning the selected supplier as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process.” While Nichols certainly provides access to information about suppliers, Nichols by contrast provides no disclosure or suggestion of a process wherein external contact information is accessed and integrated into an electronic purchasing process and an internal contactor directory for that process.

Discussions/Conclusions regarding Section 103(a) Rejections

As discussed above, neither Schwartzhoff nor Nichols discloses various aspects of claims 1 and 29, as amended. As such, this is not a situation of combining known components in a known way for which patentability is precluded under KSR. Indeed, many of the claimed components and their combination are not known, as set forth above. In addition, Applicants submit that for pending claims 1 and 29 there is sufficient functional relationship between any printed matter on a graphical user interface and the underlying substrate, such that claims 1 and 29 recite subject matter that cannot properly be rejected as being directed to printed matter.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the obviousness rejections of independent claims 1 and 29 be withdrawn, as well as the obviousness rejections of the pending dependent claims 3-14 and 31-41.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that all pending claims 1, 3-14, 29 and 31-41 are in condition for allowance, and request that a notice of allowance be issued.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this

paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

No fees are believed due at this time. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: Oct. 8, 2009

/Stephen R. Schaefer, Reg. No. 37,927/

Stephen R. Schaefer
Reg. No. 37,927

Fish & Richardson P.C.
3200 RBC Plaza
60 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402
Telephone: (612) 335-5070
Facsimile: (877) 769-7945